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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FORMER SOUTHWEST GAS EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO ACTS OF SABOTAGE

TUCSON – Thomas Young, 58, of Tucson, pleaded guilty to Destruction of an Energy Facility, in federal district court in Tucson on Monday, March 26.

Thomas Young, who was employed as a welder by Southwest Gas from 1969 until his termination in July, 1998 pleaded guilty to knowingly and willfully damaging the property of an energy facility, in this case regulator station # 596, which was owned by Southwest Gas Corporation and located in the Saddlebrook development in Marana. The charges stem from events that occurred on November 6, 2000, when Young, who had extensive operational knowledge of the Southwest Gas pipeline system, tampered with the natural gas components and caused over pressurization of the system, which led to explosions, burst pipes and property damage. Approximately 3,500 homes in the Saddlebrook area were affected and some residents had to be evacuated..

A conviction for Destruction of an Energy Facility carries a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, a \$ 250,000 fine or both and up to 3 years of supervised release. In determining an actual sentence, Chief Judge Roll will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Chief District Court Judge John M. Roll on June 26, 2007.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Pima County Sheriff's Department with the assistance of the Pinal County Sheriff's Department, Tucson Police Department, Oro Valley Police Department and the Phoenix Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Beverly K. Anderson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-2041
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